

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 10

WASHINGTON WEEKLY
12 June 1979

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SALT (orig)
CIA in Turkey (info)*

Turkey Shows Up Soviets On SALT

WASHINGTON—Thanks to a clever ploy by our NATO ally, Turkey, the Soviet Union is being forced to put up or shut up as regards the verification provisions of the SALT II treaty which forbid any interference by one nation with the intelligence collection systems ("national technical means," or NTM) belonging to the other nation. The inside story of this development is as follows:

Among its military facilities in Turkey, the United States has four intelligence-gathering stations that are critically important to the verification of SALT II. These sites are: Sinop, on the Black Sea coast of north central Turkey; Karamursel, on the southeastern shore of the Sea of Marmara; Belbasi, near Ankara in central Turkey; and Diyarbakir, in southeastern Turkey, north of the Syrian border.

These intelligence listening posts were crucial in tracking an April 198 Soviet test launch on an SS-18 intercontinental missile from the Kamchatka Peninsula in Siberia, and in many previous such tests. U.S. intelligence officials agree that, in the absence of our Iranian stations, which were lost earlier this year, these Turkish stations are vitally important to watching the early stages of such Soviet missile tests.

But there is a problem. In August 1975, in retaliation against a U.S. congressional arms embargo imposed on their country following its 1974 invasion of Cyprus, the Turks ordered a shutdown of all U.S. military bases. In September of last year, however these bases were allowed to reopen for one year, until the United States and Turkey worked out a permanent, mutually acceptable economic and military agreement.

So on May 8, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher flew to Istanbul, where he met for four hours with Turkish Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit. During this meeting Christopher presented Ecevit with a three-page letter from President Carter which asked permission for American U-2

reconnaissance planes to fly over Turkish air space near the Soviet border to help verify the SALT II pact.

Well; Ecevit balked. He balked because the Turks have been very sensitive about U-2s ever since CIA pilot Francis Gary Powers was shot down in 1960 during a spy flight over the Soviet Union—a flight that had taken off from a U.S. base in Turkey. This incident strained relations and created a lot of trouble between the two countries.

Following the Christopher-Ecevit meeting, it was widely reported that the Turkish prime minister had refused to allow such U.S. flights unless the Soviet Union gave its approval. In Istanbul, Ecevit declared:

"(We) are aware of the great importance of SALT II for humanity. If there are any duties which befall us in the implementation of SALT II . . . we would like to fulfill them. However, both of the parties which signed SALT II should be in agreement concerning the necessity and meaning of the contribution expected from us. Otherwise, it might seem as if Turkey, which is not a party to the agreement, were siding with one of the parties. We have no right to do this and do not believe it is right."

The way the press played this response the image was one of the Turks on their knees asking Soviet permission to use their own air space. The Washington Post editorialized that Turkey's reaction was "startling behavior for an ally and fellow NATO member that presumably benefits from the greater stability and security being pursued in SALT."

But sources close to the Turkish government tell a different story. First, they say that Turkey will not necessarily abide by what the Soviets say. Secondly, they say, gleefully, that Turkey has put the Soviets on the spot by forcing them to say yes or no to the question of intelligence information that the United States is legally allowed to gather under the SALT II verification provisions.